new masses

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REVOLT IN THE PUNJAB

by Ralph Izard

HOW TO RAISE A LYNCHER

by Lawrence Gellert

THE WEBBS AS I KNEW THEM

by John A. Kingsbury

HOLLYWOOD: THE "NEW LOOK"

by William Gropper

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A letter from

John Howard Lawson

DEAR Reader and Friend of NEW MASSES: Last week you read NEW MASSES' emergency appeal for $15,000 by January 15, to save the magazine and enable it to play the role required of it in these crucial times. Of this sum, $10,000 is needed by Christmas.

I would like to tell you directly why it is so important for NEW MASSES to live and fight:

When I was under the kleig lights at the Rankin-Wood inquisition of Hollywood, I was accused, among other things, of being a Contributing Editor to NEW MASSES, and of having written articles for it. Had I been given the opportunity to speak there, I would have proudly confessed to these crimes, and I would have also informed the inquisitors of my intention to continue writing for NEW MASSES.

By trying to terrorize me and others, the witch-hunters are really trying to silence the people who now find NEW MASSES one of the few courageous organs open to them. For nearly thirty-seven years it has led the fight for progressive ideas and action in politics and culture. For thirty-seven years it has fought the various thought-control schemes which have plagued our Republic. Today it is fighting the greatest conspiracy of all, the conspiracy of the fascist cliques to subvert the entire base and spirit of true Americanism, the Americanism of the people, and to plunge the world into another war.

You have heard the cry of horror that swept through the country at the inquisitorial terror at Washington. We of the Hollywood Nineteen and hundreds of our fellow writers, actors and directors are fighting back, helping arouse the country to the danger of fascism. Here the question is not how red or pink you are. The question is simply whether you are ready to defend the First Amendment, to prevent the burning of the books and the banning of progressive films, to defend our basic rights of American citizenship.

NEW MASSES stands for this, and for much more. Without it we will lack the focal point around which Communists and other progressives can gather to carry on the fight against the fascist peril, strengthen their ranks, and join forces with all democratic Americans.

If for no other reason, this is enough to require your utmost effort to sustain NEW MASSES. I am acquainted with some of the plans now under foot to make it a more effective magazine, plans which will be shared with you through the pages of NEW MASSES. I fully intend to do all I can to help save the magazine. I want to urge you, too, to contribute *now*. Ask your friends to contribute. Use the airmail, special delivery, wire or bring your donation directly to NEW MASSES.

Sincerely yours,

JOHN HOWARD LAWSON.

(*See coupon page* 14)

new masses

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THE NEW LOOK

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PUNJAB:

What the Peasants Told Me

"The riflemen squinted down their sights at the seated men. No one moved. The sub-inspector barked a command . . ."

By RALPH IZARD

Most of the farming villages of the Punjab are nameless, like those of the rest of India. There are too many of them to name —750,000 in all India, with 360,000,000 people living in them. So the villages are known only by number, such as "Village No. 18, Multan District." It was toward this village that Hardaev Singh and I trudged over the loose sand between scattered tussocks of tough desert grass.

The dry, grit-filled wind blew steadily, the same wind that blows over the *kala* punjab—the "dark" Punjab —the year around, a furnace blast throughout the long summer, keen as a Sikh knife in the wintertime. The section gained the name of the "dark" Punjab during the long years leaders of India's peasant leagues struggled vainly to build their organization among the peasants on its huge leasehold estates.

These high, dry plains in the Indian North are made fertile by an irrigation system that Hari Singh, chief of peasant organization in the Punjab, calls "one of the few really fine British accomplishments in India." Our route lay along one of the irrigation canals that with the hot sun and the long summer make this a two-crop country. Nearly a third of all India's wheat comes from the Punjab, most of it spring wheat planted after the cash crop—cotton—is picked in October.

Indian villages lie far off the few narrow, shallowly-ballasted macadam highways built for British military use. Chak No. 18 is no exception. We had been walking steadily for nearly fifteen minutes when we met one of Hardaev Singh's friends from the Jullundur District, Kishan Chand (or, as he would be called in English, "Farmer" Chand, since Kishan is only a variant of the word for peasant—*kisan*).

Farmer Chand was himself a tenant, but a very independent one, with a deep pride in the strength of the peasant leagues—*kisan sabhas*—in the Jullundur District. In the Jullundur District, he told us proudly, the tenants would never brook the kind of treatment or the taxes and penalties imposed by the landlords hereabouts. As a volunteer organizer for the peasant leagues, Kishan Chand gave us a few examples of the kind of taxation imposed by Multan District landlords on their sub-tenants:

"Over in Chak No. 15, the landlord taxes twenty-seven *seers* out of every *maund*, instead of the twenty *seers* that are his by law.* And he fines the tenants if their cows walk into his house.

"The three Dah brothers, who inherited their land, allow the peasants only one-seventh of the crop. Some landlords even demand one *seer* out of every *maund* for 'losses to the sparrows.' Others take five *seers* for 'technical expenses.' Still others take seven *seers* for 'depreciation of the oxen.' And then there's the water tax—a flat five rupees per acre."

"Water tax?" I asked. "Is that a government tax?"

"No. It is what the landlord pays to the irrigation company for water—two rupees eight annas per acre of *chara* (fodder), or as much as three rupees eight annas for wheat. But he doesn't want the peasant to bother his head with too much figuring, so the landlord just charges him a flat five rupees per acre for water tax. . . .

"And then there's the *jajri* fee," Kishan Chand mused.

"What's that?"

"Oh, thirty rupees in most places around here. It's what the tenant has to pay the landlord when the tenant's daughter gets married."

"What!"

Kishan Chand nodded solemnly. So did Hardaev Singh, stroking his thin young Sikh's beard.

"But what for?" I demanded. "Why should the tenant pay his landlord when the tenant's daughter gets married? What's the landlord got to do with that?"

"Well," Kishan Chand said thoughtfully, "she drank the landlord's well-water and she breathed the landlord's fresh air all the time she was growing up, didn't she? For that her father must pay."

I halted to mop the sweat streaming from my face. Off in the distance a file of towering camels stalked along beside the highway, each bearing a huge load of cotton bales for the Khanewal gin. Seen through the thin, dry air, Chak No. 18 seemed very close at hand. Yet Kishan Chand had time enough to tell us of the marvel seen by the peasants on May Day before we reached the village well.

Months ago, on that first of May, he said, the peasants from all the countryside along the Northwest Railway had witnessed this thing, a marvel unknown in their time. To the peasants the passage of the trains had marked the hours of the day almost as well as the sun itself. The goods trains and passenger coaches had been as familiar as their own countryside to them since childhood; many of their cousins, brothers, uncles, nephews worked on the railway. They had left the fields to become part of the still-tiny army of Indian industrial workers, whose numbers amount to less than one million in the vast human sea of 400,000,000 people that is India.

On this May Day morning the

* The *seer* is the basic "standard" weight of India. In the South it is equal to two pounds, in northern India, 2.2 pounds. Forty *seers* equal one *maund* in either area.

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seven o'clock train rolled slowly into the Khanewal station as usual. But this time it did not roll out again a few minutes later. Other trains rolled up behind it, and stopped, until the double line of them stretched both ways from Khanewal for miles. Peasants who could see the halted trains from their fields trudged across the sands to find out what was going on.

At the station they found the train crews standing about the engine of the seven o'clock passenger train while the divisional superintendent harangued them. The peasants listened to him as curiously as the crewmen. The Anglo-Indian superintendent alternately cajoled and threatened the men standing before him, speaking to them in fluent Punjabi. But the Red Flag Railway Union members listened as impassively as the peasants. After a time the superintendent stopped talking and disappeared within the station. In a few moments he emerged again, accompanied by the station master, the telegrapher's assistant, both the sweepers and the restaurant crew. The superintendent and the sweepers mounted to the cab of the slow-breathing locomotive. The rest of the pickup crew scattered along the coaches of the train.

Now the silent railwaymen moved. All of them sat down on the rails before the locomotive, two rows of silent, waiting men. The train whistle screamed repeatedly as the superintendent tugged upon the cord. Not one man moved from his seat upon the rails. The great driving wheels ground slowly once around as the superintendent eased back the throttle. No one moved. Royal Indian Navy cadets craned out the windows of their coach compartments, calling back and forth in low, excited voices.

Again the train whistle screamed, an interminable series of short blasts this time, followed by one long-drawn, dying whistle as the boiler pressure fell. Then the superintendent climbed down again from the cab. He was followed into the station by the makeshift crew. Most of the railwaymen remained seated on the rails; a few rose to greet their friends among the watching peasants with grave courtesy.

But railwaymen and peasants alike fell silent again as a column of marching men emerged from the dust cloud raised by their feet along the road from Khanewal. The constabulary halted in the shade on the western side of the station, grounding their rifles, mopping the sweat and grit from their faces, and peered curiously about them at the standing engine, the passenger-laden cars with the cadets still craning out of them, the other halted trains stretching far down the track in either direction. They stared at the strikers on the rails, who silently ignored them. Their commanding sub-inspector vanished through the superintendent's doorway.

Illustration by Amen.

SHORTLY he reappeared. With a few commands he ranged his men before the station in a single line paralleling the strikers seated on the rails. The superintendent and his crew emerged and made their way to the locomotive cab and the coaches. Now the sub-inspector took his post at the end of the line of riflemen nearest the engine. Jerking his revolver from his holster he barked further commands. Rifles were thrown to shoulders; the constabulary squinted down their sights at the men seated on the rails.

Then the sub-inspector addressed the strikers, waving his revolver at them as he spoke. If they did not clear the rails immediately, he told them, he would order his men to fire.

No one moved.

The sub-inspector barked a command. All down the line of constabulary there was the merged cla-a-ck of rifle bolts. He waited, glancing up and down the parallel lines of seated strikers.

No one moved.

A coach compartment door banged open, loud in the stillness. The sub-inspector glanced up. Other compartment doors clattered open as the naval cadets poured out of their coaches, their rifles in their hands. The sub-inspector glanced uncertainly at the seated strikers, at his line of riflemen, then back again to the running cadets. Now they too were forming into a line at the orders of a rating who had assumed command. They ranged themselves between the seated strikers and the constabulary, who still stood with their rifles to their shoulders.

Again there was the rattle of rifle bolts as the cadets jammed cartridges into the firing chambers of their pieces. Only their commander had not raised his rifle to his shoulders, but stood holding it waist-high, pointed at the sub-inspector's belly, his finger inside the trigger guard. Leaning forward over his rifle he addressed the sub-inspector in Hindustani.

"If you fire, we will fire," he said.

The sub-inspector glared wordlessly back at the young cadet. By now his pistol arm hung limp at his side, the muzzle of the revolver pointing to the ground. Along the constabulary line two or three men let their rifle butts slip slowly from their shoulders.

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Still their commander did not speak. Other rifle butts began to slide toward the ground as though the constabulary were overcome with their weight. The sub-inspector peered down the line of constabulary once more. Only a few of his men still held their rifles level, and even these were wavering. In a choked, tired voice the sub-inspector order his men to ground arms, then moved them off again into the shade beside the station.

Again the divisional superintendent dismounted from the locomotive cab. He was followed into his office by the other station attendants who had composed his train crew.

By now the cadets had broken without command, and were mingling with the strikers and peasants, talking in young, excited voices. Some cadets squatted on their heels, cradling their rifles between their knees as they talked with those strikers who still had not moved from the rails. Two men rose from the rails and mounted to the engine cab, where they flung a few shovels of coal into the firebox; then they rejoined the other railwaymen. The constabulary lounged in the shade, half-dozing in the heat. The peasants watched silently, storing up memories of this wonder.

"There was no more trouble that day," Kishan Chand said. "The strike ended on schedule at eleven. But that was not the end of it, as you will see."

BY NOW we had come to a broad-parapeted well atop which a water buffalo circles endlessly, turning the vertical axle extending down into the well, raising water to the thirsty land. One of the old men from Chak No. 18 squatted on an arm jutting out from the curving timber to which the beast was yoked, goading his haunches with a pointed stick whenever he showed signs of slowing to a stop.

Kishan Chand disappeared into one of the single-story, windowless mud-huts, leaving Hardaev Singh and me seated on a log below the well. Shortly the peasants summoned by Kishan Chand began to gather about us in a circle of squatting men, relaxed and silent. Most of them kept their eyes fixed upon the ground, rather than embarrass the strangers by staring. But from time to time one of them would glance briefly up at us. All the dark faces had the same corner-crinkled eyes common to plainsmen, seafarers and fliers the world over. Kishan Chand rejoined us with the last of the men he had been able to find, squatting down among them.

There was a silence, and then Kishan Chand began to urge the circle of men to tell us of their troubles. Hardaev Singh questioned the circle without response until at length one Moslem in a dirty crimson turban, ragged and thin as his fellow-farmers, began to talk. They were all sub-tenants, he told us, living on part of the 1,150 acres that their three landlords leased jointly from the British land company. For these forty-six "squares" (*murrabas*—about twenty-five acres each) their landlords paid an annual rent of 100,000 rupees, or a little less than the cash that four squares of cotton would yield.

Only eighteen of the forty-six *murrabas* were tenanted; each family farmed about four acres of its own. But even on their own land, for which they paid the landlord an annual rent of ten rupees, they were not permitted to raise vegetables or any other food crop not profitable to the landlord. And there was the strictest accounting for all produce.

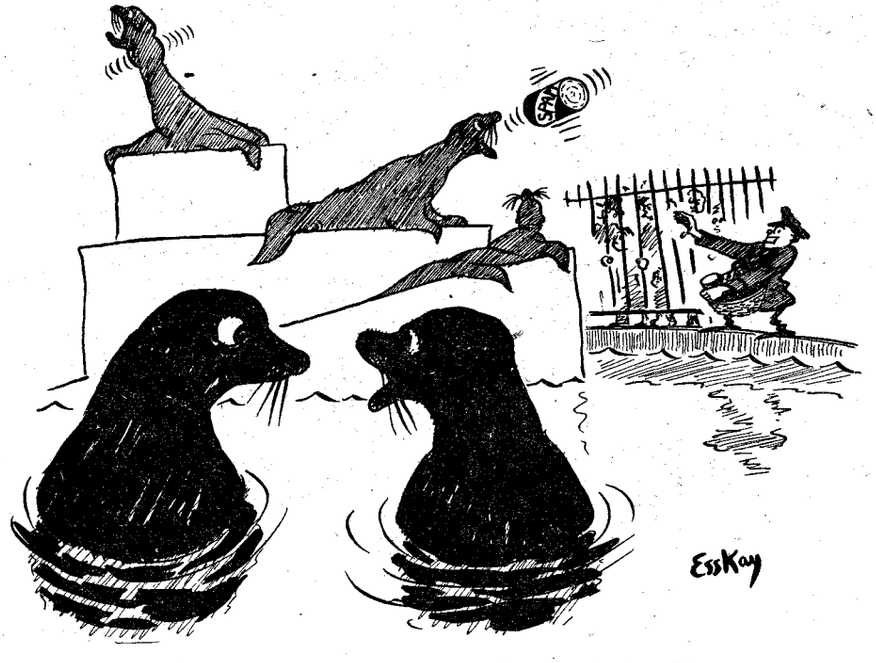
"If we could raise our own crops without interference," the turbaned Moslem said, "we would have enough to eat and clothes to wear. As it is—well, our landlords fined Triloch Chand thirty rupees for picking a melon to eat from his own land—a watermelon that costs about one anna.

"We pay the water tax, we bring our own seed to the land, we use our own farm animals," he said, looking up at us with sombre eyes. "For this the *raj* says we will receive half what the land yields. But we never do; the landlord takes here and takes there until there is scarcely anything left to divide. Now he tries to rob us of the cotton crop."

There had been little trouble in the spring when the wheat was harvested—oh, a few fines here and there, short-weighting and other standard landlord practices. But the claims made by the landlords in the spring were as nothing to those they made when the cotton bolls burst. Then they told the peasants that only the cotton from the tenanted land would be divided half-and-half. Why? Because since the twenty-eight squares of untenanted land were worked in common, no tenant had a legal claim to share in its yield.

In secrecy and by night a few of the peasants in Chak No. 18 took counsel among themselves. From among themselves they chose an emissary to lay their case before the Moslem League in Khanewal. But their emissary was rebuffed: Feroze Hussain, one of their three landlords, was a power in the League in Khanewal.

Another emissary was sent to Khanewal, to the sub-district headquarters of the Indian National Congress Party, on the following day. But he found things much the same with the Congress as with the League: Tek Chand Batia and Ram Chand Kukar, the other two landlords, were dominant Congress members.



"I wonder what's causing the herring shortage?"

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Sitting in the darkness within the hut the peasants who heard the second report were long silent. Then Deva Singh, Sikh veteran with fifteen years' service in the British army, began to speak. Their brothers on the railway had some mysterious source of strength, he said, that was more powerful than the division superintendent, more powerful than the constabulary, more powerful than the *raj* itself. For he had learned that the trains had not only stopped in Khanewal: they had been halted all over India, from the Indus to the Ganges, the Punjab to Madras. Would this strength give them power also, that they might take their half of the cotton?

They talked long into the night. Before dawn many men from Chak No. 18 left the mudhuts to assemble near the Khanewal station, where the railway union was to hold a divisional conference. Deva Singh acted as their spokesman. He told the railwaymen of the cotton they had planted, how they had tended it through the long, burning summer and how, now that the fields were snowy as the far-off Himalayan mountaintops, they were denied their proper share.

THE railwaymen listened intently. For many of them, Deva Singh stirred almost-forgotten memories of past labor in the fields of the Punjab. Then another Sikh rose to his feet to reply for the railway union. Gyan Singh, leader of the Red Flag union and veteran of the long struggle to organize the Northwest Railway, told the peasants they must stand together for their rights. If they stood united before their landlords, their landlords would not dare deny them their share of the crop.

"Go back to the village," he said. "Demand what is yours by right and by the law. We will stand behind you."

This they did. Their landlords listened to Deva Singh assert their right to half the cotton. Then Tek Chand Batia told him and the peasants standing eight-deep behind him that they had no claim to the cotton from the common land. It all belonged to them, to the landlords, he said.

Two days later Gyan Singh came to the village as he had promised, bringing with him Bishan Singh, an organizer for the peasant leagues. The peasants told them of the landlords' refusal to share the cotton as they all sat about the village well. There was long discussion. Then Bishan Singh told them that they must go forth to the fields and pick the cotton, dividing it exactly themselves — half for the landlords, half for those who had worked the fields. At first many were fearful and would not go into the cotton fields. But their hearts grew big with courage as Gyan Singh talked to them. He led them into the fields with Bishan Singh, under the slogans that the peasants had chosen for the task:

"On the fields, half-and-half!"

"Red Flag our flag!"

By the third day all the cotton had been picked. Half of it lay piled in the landlords' sheds, half lay in the mudhuts waiting to be carried to the Khanewal gin. Then, the Moslem narrator told us, forty-five constables and three sub-inspectors appeared in the village. (This figure was promptly contradicted by one of the village elders, who said, no, there had been fifty constables with the three sub-inspectors. "I know how many there were," he said positively. "I had to cook for them.")

The senior sub-inspector decreed that two of the landlords should meet with two tenant representatives until they arrived at some solution satisfactory to both parties. Landlords Tek Chand Batia and Feroze Hussain spoke for themselves and their absent partner. Deva Singh and Shahadat Batte represented the tenants. The argument went on for two days, until the senior sub-inspector tired of it and called the villagers out to hear the decision, which he said must be made at once.

But it was still a deadlock. The landlords refused to yield one *seer* of their claims to the cotton. Shahadat Batte and Deva Singh stood fast by the right of the peasants to one-half the cotton they had raised.

For such refusal to compromise with the uncompromising landlords, both peasant representatives were promptly flung into the Khanewal jail, along with Gyan Singh and Bishan Singh. Another thirty-nine peasants picked at random from among the most stalwart were jailed with them. The rest of the men in the village fled to the jungles to escape the landlords' vengeance. Their womenfolk moved into Khanewal, or sought safety in the homes of relatives in other villages. The constabulary broke into all the mudhuts, where they seized the cotton and dumped it in with the landlords' share.

Of those arrested, seventeen were tried and found guilty under Sections 105 and 107 of the Criminal Procedure Code, which deal with "dangers to the peace." Another twenty-six were arraigned for the crime of "dacoity" — defined by the code as "armed robbery in bands of five or more members." They too were given

THE WINDS OF HISTORY

History dies on the hour, the half the quarter
striking of the giant clocks in every town hall
yet lives on forever divided into each man;

So, sister, think: you are Saint Teresa
hearing voices among the olive trees
or are you the great whore of Babylon?

And you, brother, think: are you the slave
who will not be otherwise or the clerk in whom
stir the heavenly movements of a Talleyrand?

For we are what they made us, we are
what they taught, we are leaves of the giant
jungle vine of history which dies and grows:

The ashes of Hitler and FDR, blown
on the winds of the stratosphere
have always battled to the death
in each Tarawa corpuscle of every man's bloodstream:

We were all there in the evening at the Garden of Gethsemane.

JAMES NEUGASS.

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long jail sentences. One peasant was released unconditionally.

Now our Moslem narrator was silent again, watching a handful of dry sand trickle through his fingers. I took off my solar topee to mop my face, gazing off over the flat, endless plains. An old Sikh with the mad eyes of lifelong hunger burning in his noble face stared intently at me from across the circle. Suddenly he leaned forward and spoke in a low, accusing tone:

"We are poor. You can burn us, shoot us, kill us. We are at your mercy."

Hardaev Singh touched the old khakis that I wore, and indicated my solar topee. Because of my uniform-like clothing the old man had taken me for an English official investigating the disturbance at Chak No. 18.

The turbaned Moslem looked up at us again.

"Here in this village we have always lived at peace together — Moslems, Hindus, Sikhs," he said. "But now our landlords are trying to set us against one another."

No one spoke again. At length we rose, and I looked about once more at this village, so like hundreds of thousands of other Indian villages—villages for which even the nineteenth century has not yet dawned. The water buffalo still circled endlessly about the high, wide parapet of the well, the wooden gears still creaked.

We plodded back toward the highway again through the loose sand, the gritty wind blowing steadily in our faces. Hardaev Singh told me as we walked that since the May Day strike of the railwaymen the peasant leagues had shot up throughout the Multan District like spring wheat.

"Chak No. 18 is not alone in this struggle," he said. "There are hundreds of other villages where such things are happening. But now the peasants know that they are not alone in their villages. This is no longer the 'dark' Punjab."

"Yes," Kishan Chand said, "when such things happen the people learn the strength that they have together. Perhaps some day the peasants of the Multan will be as strong as my own people in the Jullundur District. Who can tell?"

Mr. Izard served last year as a correspondent in India for Telepress, an Anglo-European news agency.

The Webbs As I Knew Them

An American friend writes of the noted pioneers who sought out the truth and boldly proclaimed it.

By JOHN A. KINGSBURY

*"Officially, the Right Honorable the Baron and Lady Passfield are a superextraordinary pair," wrote Bernard Shaw. "I never met anyone like them, either separately or in their most fortunate conjunction. Each of them is an English force; and their marriage was an irresistible reinforcement."**

"LORD PASSFIELD, SOCIALIST, IS DEAD," read the headline in the New York *Times* of October 14, announcing the death of Sidney Webb, who, according to the dispatch from London, "was the main architect of British socialism." At the age of 88, after a long illness, Sidney Webb died at Passfield Corner, Liphook, Hampshire—the charming but unpretentious estate where he and his brilliant, devoted wife had lived and worked together in single blessedness for many years, "two minds of but a single thought, two hearts that beat as one." Their ashes are to be buried in Westminster Abbey, there, in Kipling's words, to "walk with kings—nor lose the common touch."

To the Webbs' hospitable door a path was beaten by men and women from the four corners of the earth. Plain people, and their leaders, scholars and statesmen seeking knowledge, wisdom or guidance—all were equally welcome.

Beatrice Webb, after a brief illness, died April 30, 1943, at the age of 85. In reply to my message of sympathy, Sidney Webb wrote: "I am, as you will realize well, very lonely without her, but it is with pleasure I tell you she was working up to the end, and keeping her interest in all that is happening in these times. It is good to know how you and your wife appreciate my wife. I know she always enjoyed her correspondence with you both." Doubtless this is typical of the reply he wrote hundreds of sorrowing friends. No engraved response for him.

The intellectual and literary partnership of the Webbs was indeed unique. It is not surprising to one who knew their work that they appeared to the public as "two typewriters that clicked as one." It is quite true that the Webbs were "the perennial and unfailing source of all effective socialist propaganda" in England, but it is misleading to say that Sidney Webb was "the main architect of *modern* (italics mine) British socialism." He was the head and front of the Fabian Society, and the co-coiner of the famous phrase: "The inevitability of gradualness." Finally, however, the Webbs found that their Fabian philosophy could not stand the crucial test of the Russian revolution, "which changed crude Czarism into Red communism." As Shaw wrote in 1942, "The history of Communist Russia for the past twenty years in the British and American press is a record in recklessly prejudiced mendacity. The Webbs waited until the wreckage and ruin of the change was ended, its mistakes remedied, and the Communist state fairly launched. Then they went to investigate it. In their last two volumes they give us the first really scientific analysis of the Soviet state, and its development of our political and social experiments and institutions, including trade unionism and cooperation, which we thought they had abolished. No Russian could have done this all-important job for us. The Webbs knew England, and knew what they were talking about. No one else did. They

* An Essay on the Webbs, 1942.

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unhesitatingly gave the Soviet system their support, and announced it definitely as a New Civilization."

In short, the Webbs came to the conclusion, after their 1932 study on the spot, that Soviet communism had fared better than their own "inevitability of gradualness" in Great Britain.

As Bryce's *The American Commonwealth* is the classic on the frame of American government, on how our Constitution rescued us from the critical period of our history prior to 1789, on how it worked during the century that followed—so the Webbs' *Soviet Communism—A New Civilization* is the classic on the frame of government of the Soviet Union, on the political, economic and social developments following the Russian revolution which changed crude Czarism into Red communism, on how Soviet communism has worked in the USSR during the first quarter-century of its existence. Just as no American could have written an objective account of the American Commonwealth, no Russian could have done this all-important job for the Russian and for the Anglo-Saxon people. After a critical study of several years, they gave the Soviet system their support. The title of the first edition of their work is *Soviet Communism—A New Civilization?* The title of the second and enlarged edition: *Soviet Communism—A New Civilization.* Period!

Sidney Webb.

On Jan. 4, 1938, Mrs. Webb wrote to me: "I am so glad you and Mrs. Kingsbury have found our *Soviet Communism* interesting. It has certainly had a very considerable sale, and the Russian translation has been published, which, we are told by our friend Professor Turin, who is not a Communist, is a very correct translation, and has not attempted to suppress any of our criticisms."

TO THE second edition the authors added over 100 pages, including the text of the new Constitution of 1936, and a chapter dealing with the celebrated treason trials. As Walter Duranty said: "When the Hitler attack came, the difference between the countries of Western Europe and the Soviet Union was that, in the former, the Quislings were in the cabinets, while in the latter they were in their graves!"

Soviet Communism—A New Civilization is indeed absolutely unique. It was after an interval of only four years that the second enlarged edition of two volumes and 1,326 pages appeared. Harold Laski wrote: "There is no book which remotely compares with it either in insight or intellectual caliber." In their preface to this second edition the Webbs give us some idea of the magnitude of their undertaking: "In all history there has been no such a colossal and exciting experiment. It takes us over 900 pages . . . to set forth all the welter of structure and function making up what is, merely in magnitude, the biggest integrated social organization in the world."

And if one would like an insight into the superb life of this "super-extraordinary pair," as well as into their intellectual caliber, let him read the final paragraph of that preface:

"The question will arise in some quarters: Why did two aged mortals, both nearing their ninth decade, undertake a work of such magnitude? We fear our presumption must be ascribed to the recklessness of old age. In our retirement, with daily bread secured, we had nothing to lose by the venture—not even our reputation, which will naturally stand or fall by our entire output of the past half-century, to the load of which one more book makes no appreciable difference. On the other hand, we had a world to gain, a new subject to investigate; a fresh circle of stimulating acquaintances with whom to discuss entirely new topics, and above all a daily joint occupation, in intimate companionship, to interest, amuse and even excite us in the last stage of life's journey. This world we have gained and enjoyed. To use a theological term, this book is therefore to be received as a work of supererogation, which, as we understand it, means something not required, but spontaneously offered, which may be ignored or criticized, but which does not warrant blame, even if it be deemed (to use the words of Steele) 'an act of so great supererogation as singing without a voice'! Or to take a humbler analogy, it may be taken as the *et cetera*, often thrown in as a gift by the salesman with a package of goods already paid for. As such we may present it unabashed to our British and American readers."

Nor was that all; on Jan. 1, 1942, Mrs. Webb wrote me: "We have just

Beatrice Webb.

brought out the last edition of *Soviet Communism* with a new introduction by me, dealing with current events. There is, unfortunately, a very limited number as all our books were burnt in the great blitz fire of December, 1940. So I am afraid it will not get to the USA." I regret to say I have not yet seen this last edition.

I WRITE as a veteran social worker whose social philosophy and course of political action during the past forty years has been profoundly influenced by the Webbs—and what social worker has not been influenced by the Webbs, whether he knows it or not? Consider a few of their outstanding contributions in the field of social welfare alone: Beatrice Webb's part (which determined her career) in the first "grand inquest" into the conditions of life and labor in London, the first comprehensive study of poverty in a great city, planned and executed over a period of seventeen years by the late

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Charles Booth, her cousin by marriage; her book, resulting from this historical research: *The Cooperative Movement in Great Britain*; the first joint work of the Webbs, *The History of Trade Unionism*. As members of the Royal Commission on the Poor Law and Unemployment, the Webbs were mainly responsible for the minority report which issued from the commission and set in motion the Socialist and Labor campaign for the breakup of the iniquitous Poor Law system and the prevention of destitution. These and other important contributions of the Webbs laid the foundation for the social insurance system of Great Britain, as well as for much of the most significant social legislation enacted by our own New Deal Congress under the leadership of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In the summer of 1934, I visited the Webbs at their home, Passfield Corner, with Sir Arthur Newsholme, joint author with me of *Red Medicine: Socialized Health in Soviet Russia*. We had made our study of the public health and medical services in the USSR in 1932, the year the Webbs were there. They were generous enough to read our manuscript and, naturally, they made invaluable suggestions. We found them continuing their study of the Soviet Union in preparation for the first edition of *Soviet Communism*. We had a memorable visit, comparing notes and reactions to our observations on life in the Soviet Union, comparing the political, social and economic conditions in that "new civilization" with our old civilization. Sir Arthur and I made quite extensive notes of our interview, from which I take the following excerpts, with special reference to social insurance and other reforms in England and in the US, as compared with the Soviet system:

Mr. and Mrs. Webb had no doubt of the immediate gain to the insured accruing from insurance benefits. Anxiety is alleviated, malnutrition and its evil results are postponed, and the insured family has time to "turn round" and look for renewed employment in the same or in a new industry.

But the Webbs appeared to be clear that grave risks were in the offing. There was the risk of relaxation of effort to get back to work, and sometimes there was actual attempt to leave work and get "on the benefit." There were also drawbacks from the point of view of the employer and the state.

Although they were not directly opposed to social insurance as an interim remedy they did not regard it as a sound permanent proposition. It did not help in securing re-employment and it did not attack the social factors which, in their view, necessitate a great amount of unemployment under present social and economic conditions.

So long as capitalism in its present form continues, they consider, unemployment must continue, and with more scientific administration of industry it must, in their view, inevitably go on increasing to a point when it cannot be satisfactorily dealt with by insurance methods. This is true for what they call "technological unemployment," *i.e.*, the unemployment resulting from increased and more skilled use of machinery, steadily reducing the human staff needed to use it.

The final issue, if the maximum good of the entire community and indeed of all communities is to be secured, must be *planned production for community consumption*, a pregnant phrase of theirs which appears to express in few words their philosophy of the life of work. This issue only becomes practicable when capitalism has been removed, and industry has been newly organized regulating production *on the basis of consumption*.

But one of us suggested this is an ideal which in immediate politics is impracticable. Are we then to allow the present evils to continue, until we can persuade the peoples to revolutionize the conditions of industry?

This difficulty Mr. and Mrs. Webb agreed went far to justify—perhaps even to necessitate—interim measures; and social insurance stands foremost among these. But it must be recognized, they urged, that any such interim measures can only be palliative, and in the end abolition of private profit is an indispensable condition of complete social health and welfare.

OOPS!

"Though most of Clifford's reading has been confined to legal works, he has always prided himself on his knowledge of American history. When he once remarked that Thomas Paine was a gap in his knowledge, someone handed him Howard Fast's *Citizen Tom Paine* to read. Clifford was so enthusiastic that, without realizing its propagandistic nature, he passed the novel on to several other people. Later he was chagrined to learn that Fast is an editor of the Communist organ, the NEW MASSES." (From an article about Clifford M. Clark entitled "Truman's One-Man Brain Trust," in the *Saturday Evening Post*, October 4.)

MY LAST word from Beatrice Webb was a letter of Feb. 4, 1943—about three months prior to her death. I quote the following significant paragraph:

"We were so glad to get your letter of December 18 and to hear that you are still working for Anglo-Soviet friendship. It is as clear as daylight that without the cooperation of the USSR, not only in winning the war, but also in making a durable peace, we shall fail as we did after the last war."

In his tribute to Mrs. Webb shortly after her death, which appeared in the London *Times*, Mr. Maisky, the Soviet Ambassador, wrote:

"My last meeting with her at the Webbs', at Liphook, made a very profound impression on me because, when we were leaving, Mrs. Webb said to us: 'My testament to the British people is—to keep the closest possible friendship with the Soviet people. Without it, I see no future.'"

I referred at the outset to a letter from Sidney Webb in reply to my message of sympathy, written when I learned of Mrs. Webb's death. I had written that, age overtaking them, doubtless he and his wife had often recalled the charming myth of the aging Baucis and Philemon. The Father of Gods and Men had addressed this mythological couple, saying: "For such a worthy life, what favor would you ask of us?" As that excellent elderly couple responded, so undoubtedly would have the Webbs: "Since we have passed our lives in love and concord, we wish that one and the same hour may take us both from life . . . that I may not live to see her grave, nor be laid in my own by her." Their prayer was granted. When grown very old, one day Baucis saw Philemon begin to put forth leaves, and Philemon saw Baucis changing in like manner. And now a leafy crown had grown over their heads, while exchanging parting words as long as they could speak: "Farewell, dear spouse," they said together; and at the same moment, the bark closed over their mouths. As the Tyranean shepherd still shows two trees, standing side by side, made out of two grand old people, so I believe will the Good Shepherd of the future point to the great humanitarian work of Sidney and Beatrice Webb which, like the everlasting hills, will be more enduring than the trees in the charming myth.

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Lynchers Are Not Born

by Lawrence Gellert

I wouldn't expect you, Johnny, to remember me as well as I remember you. After all its been so long since I lived in your father's house. And you were just a little shaver then. Remember how you cried when the big dog gobbled up your bunny? And the time you gave your choo-choo train to the little Negro boy whose father couldn't afford to buy him a Christmas present? You were generous and warm-hearted then, and always breathless with curiosity and questions about new discoveries. You were just like any other little boy newly arrived in the world . . . with one very significant difference. You were growing up in the South—in South Carolina.

"TIME for bed, Johnny. Come on, off with you."

"Or the Boogerman will catch me?"

"He certainly will if you don't come right this minute."

"What does he look like, Mommy?"

"Well, let's see now. He's bi-i-i-i-g. And he's bla-a-a-a-ck."

"Like the iceman?"

"Oh, come. No more talk now. Say your prayers and I'll put the light out."

". . . and please God bless Mommy and Daddy and Jimmy and puss."

"And what about Clarissa?"

"Don't want Him to bless Clarissa."

"Why-ever not? She'll not make you any more of those nice ice-box cookies."

"I don't care. I saw her talking to a Boogerman today."

"HURRY now and wash yourself. Dinner is ready."

"I'm clean, Momma."

"You're not. Look at your hands and face. They're simply black."

"Like Tommy's?"

"Well, almost. And if you don't give them a good scrubbing they'll be just as black as his."

"Doesn't Tommy ever wash, Mommy? Is that why he's black?"

"Never mind."

"Would you love me, Mommy, if I never washed and got all black?"

"How could I? You'd smell like a billy-goat."

"Does Tommy smell like a billy-goat, Mommy?"

"Oh you and your questions. I'll wash you myself. Come on."

"YOU mustn't drink there, Johnny. Can't you see people laughing at you?"

"Why are they laughing, Mama?"

"Because you're not supposed to drink there."

"Is the water dirty?"

"I suppose not. But you must go to the other one over there."

"But there's a line, Mommy—why can't I drink here?"

"Because it's for the colored people."

"Won't they let me take a drink? I'm thirsty, Momma."

"Well, then, we'll go home right away."

"But I'm thirsty, Mommy. I don't want to wait till we get home."

"Come along."

"YOU damned li'l n——r. I'll teach you to push a white boy."

"He pushed me first. Lemme go!"

"Come here, kid. What's your name? Johnny. Okay, Johnny. Whack him one, while I got his arms held."

"I don't want to. It ain't fair."

"Ain't fair to hit a damned n——r? You sound like a li'l n——r lover. Are you?"

"No, I ain't not."

"Well then, whack him one fast."

"Good. And here's another one for good measure. Now will you push a white kid again! Remember your place and you'll grow up maybe to live to a ripe old age."

"GOODY, goody! The circus is back!"

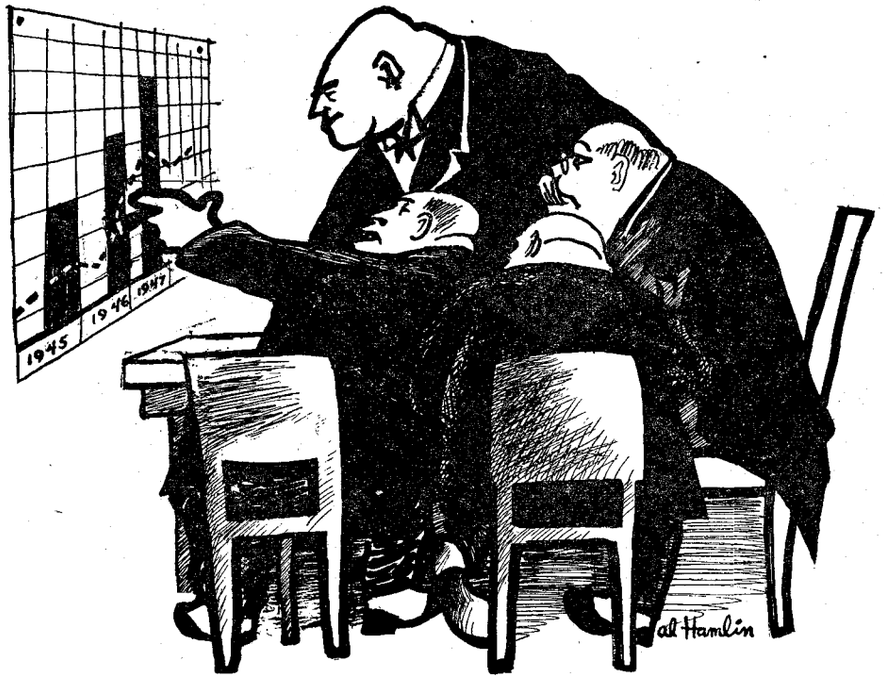
"Silly goose. There's no circus this time of year."

"It is too. Come and look. There's the circus wagon 'crost the street."

"That's not a circus wagon."

"Yes, see the cages and funny clothes and everything?. There's even a lion tamer with a whip."

"No, son. That's a chain gang.



"Since reconverting we can now produce thirty bombers per day."

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They're only parked here for their breakfast."

"What's a chain gang?"

"Convicts. Blacks who rob and kill and do terrible things so they have to lock them up."

"And put chains on them?"

"Yes, put chains on them."

"Would they hurt little boys?"

"Well, don't be afraid—Mommy and Daddy will look out for you."

"But suppose I'm left alone. . . ."

"Come on and eat your cereal."

"Now children, quiet. Janet, will you read the next example? Slowly, now, so everyone can understand it."

"A sailing vessel was caught in a storm. Food was running low. There were forty-two members of the crew aboard. Half were white men and half Negroes. Rather than that they should all starve to death it was decided to toss half the crew overboard. The whole forty-two were lined up on the deck in such a way that when the captain counted every other man to be tossed overboard, the Negroes were chosen for the sacrifice and every one of the white men were saved. For example, Number 1, a white man, was saved. Number 2, a Negro, drowned. Can you count them all up to forty-two and couple each number with "white man" or "Negro"—whichever one it happens to be?"

Johnny already has his hand up.

"Why, you hardly had time to think about it. All right, what is it?"

"Why did they have to drown all the Negroes?"

"For shame, Johnny. Would you rather they had drowned the white men instead?"

"No, but . . ."

"That's enough—back to the example."

"I BID one no trump."

"Two hearts, neighbor. I hear that n——r is still on the hoof out in the swamp. They'll get him all right, even though I think the other damn n——rs are hiding him out and fetching him food and things. If I had my way I'd run them all out of the country. No, I don't hold with those who think that way. I know I need 'em on the farm and they need me. But you got to know how to control them. Otherwise they do get out of hand. For a trifling theft here and there, a little law is all right. I even go their bond. Often pay a fine for them. But when it comes to one lifting a hand to a white man—I ain't even saying nothing about rape—plain lynchin' is too good for the son-of-a-bitch. I tell you I'd burn him piece by piece. . . ."

"What's rape and lynching, Daddy?"

"What are you doing out of bed this hour of the night, Johnny?"

"I want a drink, Daddy."

"What's rape and—"

"Shhhhhh. Mother will get you a drink."

"I bid two no trumps."

"Momma, how do you burn n——rs piece by piece?"

"Hush up. Here's your water and off back to bed with you."

"I HOPE you haven't been too worried about your little feller, Mrs. ——."

"Why, what happened, Sheriff?"

"Oh, it's nothing. He and a couple of other tykes tied up a little pickaninny and burned the soles of his feet right smart."

"Well, I never! It isn't like my Johnny at all."

"We were only playing, Momma—rape and lynch, that's what we called it. We burned the n——r piece by piece, like Daddy said."

"You bad boy!"

"They sure did start burning him piece by piece too. The little pickaninny needed hospital attention."

"What am I going to do with you, Johnny?"

"Oh, it's nothing, lady. Just a child's prank. You needn't worry none. The little n——r's father ain't goin' to make you no trouble. He knows better than to try. Personally I think it's a good sign. It shows the younger generation's going to hold up their own end with the n——rs when it come their time to run things."

I recall, Johnny, across the years, that you wanted above all to become an automobile driver, to race a great, b-i-i-i-i-g Packard. Did you grow up to realize your ambition? Pardon me, Johnny, for asking, but wasn't it you at the wheel of the car that raced the Negro boy in the G—— jailhouse to the finishing post? Did you swagger about town the following day, collecting pats on the back and free drinks for your achievement? And were you one of the defendants in the mock trial forced by the expediency of national politics? And upon swift acquittal were you perhaps the one quoted as saying "Justice has been done—the n——r is dead and we're freed." Perhaps you were only a sympathizer—part of the holiday crowd that cheered the rendered verdict of the judge and jury?

I may have gotten you all wrong, Johnny. It may be I'm talking about the little boy who lived across the street from you. Or the one just around the corner.

portside patter

By BILL RICHARDS

News Item: Estonian ex-officer says that the Soviet Army is poorly armed, badly trained and has a low morale.

I worked with the Soviet Army for more than a year and my observations are that it is a poorly equipped military force. As officer-in-charge of the enlisted men's showers with a Russian division I was constantly amazed at the lack of military equipment the soldiers carried.

Individual soldiers are poorly trained. Less than one percent of the infantrymen can fly an airplane or construct a radar set. In fact, very few can read or write English. Their morale is so low that the high command has ordered that they be given three meals a day and a two-week furlough every year. However, they are forced to stay in the country while on leave.

Only the fact that they had American supplies enabled them to defeat the Nazis.

Two Russian soldiers stood off an entire panzer division because they had an American rifle. A Soviet officer confided that the German debacle at Stalingrad was due to the fact that the Nazis captured a large supply of US "K" rations.

During the war Red Army soldiers deserted in large numbers and weren't found until weeks and months later prowling around behind the German lines.

I am glad to be a military expert for America where there is free speech and money talks.

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HOW MARX AND ENGELS LOOKED AT ART: II

It was fullness, an all-sided, rounded development that they sought and prized in human beings.

By SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN

This is the second part of a two-part article. The first appeared last week.

FOR Marx and Engels the greatest art was that which, through its own laws of truth, beauty, mastery of language and sensitivity to nature, achieved a consciousness of the broadest scope. And Marx and Engels saw that such an art could not be achieved by the artist in isolation. Looked at broadly, art was a social product. Even the creation of individual works of art was often a social activity. "Raphael himself 'executed' only a few of his frescoes. . . . If he [Max Stirner] were to compare Raphael with Leonardo Da Vinci and Titian, he would see to what extent the works of art of the first were conditioned by the flowering of Rome at the time under Florentine influence, the work of the second by conditions in Florence, and later the work of the third by the entirely different development of Venice. . . . Whether an individual like Raphael develops his talent depends entirely upon the demand, which in turn depends upon the division of labor and the cultural relations of people arising from this. . . ." (*The German Ideology.*)

Were it not that class struggles often took the form of theological disputes during the struggle of artisan and merchant against feudal landowner, and that there were church walls to which the people looked both for pictorial decoration and religious instruction, the great fresco art of Italy from Giotto's "St. Francis" series to Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel could not have come about. And these conditions, which society, not the artist, created, were not merely "influences" on the art. They entered into its very style, design and imagery. They offered the artist forms that inspired him, and an audience to which he could speak. Shakespeare's plays were made possible by the existence of an immensely popular theater art in which he could develop. Closer to our own times, we have the examples of the nineteenth century national opera, inspired by the national movements of the century, and of the Abbey Theater in Dublin, so fruitful in playwrights and actors.

An artist must grow to greatness. There are times when his full development is simply not possible. Such a situation is described in Engels' critique of Goethe.

"Thus Goethe is now colossal, now petty; now a defiant, ironical, world-scorning genius, now a calculated, complacent, narrow philistine. Even Goethe was unable to overcome the wretchedness of German life; on the contrary, it overcame him, and this victory over the greatest German is the best proof that it cannot be conquered by the individual. Goethe was too universal, too active a nature, too fleshly to seek escape from this wretchedness in a flight, like Schiller's, to the Kantian ideal; he was too sharp-sighted not to see how this flight finally reduced itself to the exchange of a commonplace for a transcendental misery. His temperament, his energies, his whole spiritual tendency directed him toward the practical life, and the practical life that he met with was miserable. . . . In this dilemma Goethe continually found himself, and the older he became the more did the powerful poet retire, weary of war, behind the insignificant Weimar minister."

It is the insight of Engels, differing from mechanical sociologists, that he shows Goethe as the expression and product of the conflicts of his times, rather than as a mouthpiece of its dominant, ruling-class ideology. These times in Germany, as Engels describes them in another essay, were "one living mass of putrefaction and repulsive decay." Goethe rebelled, and the power of economic forces is shown not

"Thought Control," woodcut by Alberto Beltran of the Taller Grafica Popular, Mexico City.

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in how they are described in his work, but in how they limited his work and, *in the end*, defeated him.

IF, TO Marx and Engels, great art was a social product, conversely the great artist was a social human being. Engels says, in *The Dialectics of Nature*:

"The men who founded the modern rule of the bourgeoisie had anything but bourgeois limitations. On the contrary, the adventurous character of the time inspired them to a greater or less degree. . . . The heroes of that time had not yet come under the servitude of the division of labor, the restricting effects of which, with its production of one-sidedness, we so often notice in their successors. But what is especially characteristic of them is that they almost all pursue their lives and activities in the midst of the contemporary movements, in the practical struggle; they take sides and join in the fight, one by speaking and writing, another with the sword, many with both. Hence the fullness and force of character which makes them complete men. Men of the study are the exception—either persons of second or third rank or cautious philistines who do not want to burn their fingers."

It was fullness, an all-sided, rounded development, that Marx and Engels prized and sought for in the human being. They appreciated the great contributions that capitalism had brought to men, as well as to art, in making possible a greater control and conquest of nature than had ever been within man's powers before, and in creating the preconditions for a new expansion of the human personality. They saw how capitalism was also destroying the productive capacities of man, destroying his senses, making him increasingly one-sided. "In manufacture, in order to make the collective laborer, and through him capital, rich in productive power, each laborer must be made poor in individual productive powers." And again, "Man adapts his all-sided being in an all-sided manner, in other words as a total man. . . . Private property has made us so stupid and one-sided that an object is *ours* only if we have it—that is, exists as capital for us or is *used* by us; immediately possessed, eaten, drunk, worn on our body or lived in. . . . Hence there has been a simple alienation of all these senses; and the sense of *having* has taken the place of *all* physical and spiritual senses. . . . The abolition of private property means therefore the complete *emancipation* of all human senses and aptitudes."

Here we have an insight into the reason why so many contemporary intellectuals in the fine arts have made the denunciation of the bourgeois, the philistine, the "materialist" a basic part of their theory of art. But such theorists, seemingly attacking the bourgeois world, remain chained to bourgeois thought. They accept the division of labor, which the bourgeois developed so remarkably, as fundamental, and carry it to an extreme where it negates itself. Not only the creation of art but even the appreciation of it becomes to them a highly specialized and difficult activity. Not only artists but even their audiences regard artists as highly unique organisms. Not only do the arts become highly specialized, but specialization rises to fantastic heights within each art. There are no longer painters but specialists in planes, specialists in formal designs, specialists in introspective psychology, specialists in color, specialists in textures, and innumerable other divisions of what was once the art of painting, each frequently made into a cult of the one "true art." The division of labor is accepted and carried so far that its product never becomes part of the general fund of social activity.

Such an insight into problems that have come to fruition only today was possible because Marx and Engels saw, in terms of the art in their own times, the dialectic of art itself. They saw why art had to undergo many divisions, yet they loved most of all those men of art who were complete men. They saw art as a product of man's developing powers, and as a tool through which he could develop himself in an all-sided manner. Art for them was a record of man's growing consciousness of the world and of his ability to adapt the world to his needs. And finally, it was a means through which he could recognize the obstacles to his progress and fight his conflicts out.

CRITICS AND AUTHORS

Critics will confront authors and attempt to work out some common ground when on Sunday, December 7, leading book reviewers participate in a forum, "How I Review a Book." Sponsored by Contemporary Writers, the affair will take place at Caravan Hall, 110 East 59 Street, at 8 p.m. Speakers will include Leon Edel of *PM*; Martha McGregor of the N. Y. *Post*; Harrison Smith, president of the *Saturday Review of Literature* and reviewer for that weekly; Sidney Finkelstein, author of *Art and Society*; Jeannette Mirsky, who reviews for *The Nation*, and Samuel Sillen, editor of *Mainstream*.

To NEW MASSES
104 East 9th St., N. Y. 3, N .Y.

(See Page Two)

Enclosed please find $..... as my contribution to your drive for $15,000 by January 15. In addition I pledge to donate $..... by .....

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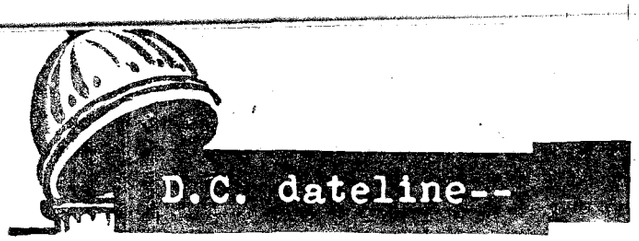

Black Gold and Your Dough

Washington.

TAXES are generally considered a dull subject. This *may* account for the obscure burial given by the commercial press to an item turned up by the War Investigating Committee. This same committee uncovered the "Benny" Meyers business—a comparatively minor affair, despite its flagrant character, when compared with the other.

Perhaps "item" is an inadequate definition of the information which committee chairman Owen Brewster (R., Me.) turned over to Treasury Secretary John W. Snyder for further investigation. The information concerned the tax-exempt profits of two of the largest petroleum corporations in the US—the Texas Company and Standard Oil of California. These two corporations have been co-owners for the past ten years of a fabulously rich oil concession in the Persian Gulf. During this time the two subsidiaries of the corporations exploiting the concession have netted profits of $117,000,000, on which not one red cent of taxes has ever been paid to the US or to any foreign country.

Details of the Caltex story are even more fascinating. One of the two subsidiaries, a Bahama corporation with an original investment of one million dollars, showed a free, clear and totally-untaxed profit of $25,387,673.44.

The other subsidiary, the Bahrein Petroleum Company, named for the barren, burning-hot rock island in the Persian Gulf where the two corporations operate their concession, has an even more fabulous record. BPC is organized as a Canadian corporation. On an original investment of $100,000 (one lakh of dollars, as they'd say in India), it showed a total profit of $92,186,107.11—also clear, free and totally-untaxed.

Senator Brewster, in his letter to Secretary Snyder, opined that the extent of "similar situations of this character affecting the tax position of American corporations operating abroad would seem to be a matter that might well invite exploration." It might well indeed, Senator! But there is another curious aspect of the Caltex operations in Bahrein, unmentioned by the Senator, which also "invites exploration."

THIS other aspect of the situation takes us over into Secretary Harriman's domain in the Department of Commerce. The Secretary is currently appearing before various and sundry Congressional committees in support of (a) the Marshall program for expanding the Truman Doctrine to global dimensions, and (b) extension of the export control powers granted his department beyond their present expiration date—Feb. 29, 1948. Continuation of these powers, first granted during the war, is known to be part-and-parcel of the Marshall application of the Truman Doctrine, by which the former Chief of Staff seeks to gear the entire governmental structure to war on any forces to the left of Gen. Charles de Gaulle or Chiang Kai-shek.

While there has been some Congressional muttering about Harriman's failure to choke off exports to the Soviet Union or other war-ravaged nations of eastern Europe entirely, instead of merely reducing them to a trickle, there is no doubt that both Houses will approve, probably without debate, extension of export controls to June 30, 1949, as Harriman wants. How these powers are used may be seen from that section of the Secretary's first quarterly report on export controls under the miscalled Second Decontrol Act. Take for instance the table dealing with American exports of that key war product, "aviation motor fuel." In the first place, export of aviation gasoline has nearly trebled in 1947 over the 1946 quantity sent out of the country.

The countries of destination for these exports are equally significant: first, France, with a 1947 rate of 924,000 barrels; Canada is second with 684,000; Mexico third with 336,000. War-torn China, where the only planes—and those American-made—are in the hands of the Kuomintang, is fourth with 264,000 barrels. It is with the fifth-ranking destination for aviation gasoline exports that we return to Caltex.

For the fifth-ranking export point for this fuel is Bahrein. Aside from the coals-to-Newcastle aspect of such shipments, these exports raise other questions: Is an American aviation base maintained at Bahrein for the benefit of these tax-exempt corporations? If so, what connection does this base have with the development of Afghanistan under American auspices, following the discovery of oil there by the American-chartered Inland Exploration Company?

Some interest in these questions must be taken by all of us who now suffer a withholding tax of one-fifth of our wages. And application of the Marshall program will probably increase that, according to Rep. Leslie C. Arends (R., Ill.). Arends has proposed a national referendum on the Marshall strategy, which would require a simple yea or nay to the question: "Do you favor the Marshall Plan if it means (a) an increase in the withholding tax to thirty percent of your wages; and (b) a minimum ten percent increase in your cost of living?"

No one in this Congress has yet suggested increasing corporate tax yields, although corporate profits after taxes *for the first quarter of 1947* were roughly equivalent *to the entire year 1939*. Senator Taft, chief Republican ideologist, would raise his hands in holy horror at such discouragement of "free enterprise." But still, the Senator and his entire party are firmly and deeply impaled upon two horns presented by the Marshall program: (1) How to pay for it. (2) How to avoid the further inflation that will be the inevitable concomitant of the program.

An answer approved by Taft was given to the first question by Marriner Eccles, chairman of the board of governors of the Federal Reserve system. Discussing the rising whirlwind of inflation before the joint committee on the economic report, Eccles urged "increased productivity of labor and longer hours of work by everyone"—or as Marx would have said, the intensification and extension of exploitation. Inevitably, his second demand was for a ceiling on wages—"suspension of future demands for wage increases." Of course, he coupled this with the pious hope that "business" would be willing to forego further price increases, since its "profits after taxes are more than double what they were in any pre-war year and almost double the profits in any war year. . . ."

So, as prices vault skyward and wages sag, the question of who pays taxes, and on what, and how much, will become of ever greater moment to us all. A. L. J.

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review and comment

FROM THE BOOKSHELF

THE LIVING NOVEL, *by V. S. Pritchett. Reynald & Hitchcock.* $2.75.

WITH the present collection of short essays on novels and novelists of three centuries, V. S. Pritchett—who writes on books for the *New Statesman and Nation*—may become better known to American readers. He is certainly worth knowing. With so little pretension as to ask his readers not to regard him as a critic, he brings to his rereading of a long and diverse list of novelists poise, the power of fresh discernment, a breadth of historical understanding, and a concision of treatment that make the reading of his book a pleasant and profitable adventure. The reading of Pritchett, like the contrast of good illumination to murky gaslight, will bring to mind the evasiveness, the diffusion, the pretentiousness of much of the writing about books current in American periodicals. Pritchett engages in no cheap gibing at Marxism, nor is he perturbed by it since he freely recognizes social meanings in the novels he reads. He really has too high a regard for the profession of criticism to put on any of the shabby-gaudy cloaks, patched out of old remnants of idealism and resurrected moralities, that are paraded fashionably on Sundays in the New York *Times*.

As a novelist he is eager to put his finger "on the new point in life from which any given novel started," and it is this kinship with the novelist's problem, as he discovers it in his material, his difficulties, even his use of his deficiencies, that produces a fresh and reviving view of some of the older writers. Not that all of Pritchett's insights are new or startling; but he does have a remarkable sense of the ways in which novelists have analyzed and developed character. Whether it is Richardson, Smollett, George Eliot—or the somewhat familiar LeFanu, the now obscure Galt, the almost forgotten J. Meade Falkner—Pritchett closes in on the novelist's knowledge of persons and gives us what we feel we ought to have seen before or just precisely, if the writer be unknown, what we certainly shall look for.

Even though he writes at about the same length on both the great names and some of his re-explored lesser-known favorites (a somewhat deceptive brilliance, Edmund Gosse, *e.g.*, appearing of greater interest than Samuel Butler), Pritchett has written short essays on George Eliot, Lawrence, Conrad and Arnold Bennett that are complete evaluations, and I for one will say that they are far above any of the "last *judgments*" (which Pritchett abhors) now available on these writers. His appreciations of Balzac, Verga, Turgenev and a few other Russian writers are to be read as the agile response of his fictional sensitivity but lacking the force of continuity, the fullness of historical framework supplied so effortlessly in his readings of the English.

It is not every novelist who is so attached to the long rich complexities of his fraternal predecessors. Pritchett searches the novel for the living experiences recorded; for the sake of life, one might say, since living revealed and remembered, in many forms by strangely diverse personalities, is the business of the novel. When he thinks in his historical retrospections he looks for the meaning of change—the novel signifies it constantly, transiently or crucially—and his consciousness of the uneven currents of relationship between the novel and society dissociates him from the paralysis of static judgments.

ALAN BENOIT.

The Dean Goes Back

SOVIET RUSSIA SINCE THE WAR, *by the Very Rev. Hewlett Johnson, Dean of Canterbury. Boni & Gaer.* $3.

"THE Dean held out both hands to Russia in friendship and love, and he, at least, was not rebuffed." This remarkably revealing statement occurs in the review of *Soviet Russia Since the War* which Oriana (Mrs. Brooks) Atkinson wrote for the New York *Times*. She found the book "carefully documented and informative" and "a robust contribution to the world's library about the USSR." Does the lady perhaps regret the pettiness and distortions of her own unworthy contribution to that literature? Does she wonder whether her own experience in the Soviet Union might have been more rewarding had she too held out both hands instead of a fastidious little finger and judged the gallant Russian people with a generous and understanding heart instead of the snobbish slick attitude of drawing-room standards?

We hear a great deal in America these days about human dignity and the rights of the individual, which presumably our society guarantees and Soviet society denies. On his latest trip to the Soviet Union Dr. Johnson sought above all to find the answer to the question as to just what kind of individual is being produced after twenty-nine years of Soviet rule. "Is Russia," he asked, "producing individuals spontaneous and enthusiastic; men and women of keen initiative, moral, likable, lovable, ready to unite with others in establishing an integrated community of free and equal individuals?" His answer is yes, and in *Soviet Russia Since the War* he documents it not only by outlining the manifold measures through which the Soviet state provides the material and spiritual basis for the fullest possible development of the individual and his creative powers, but by introducing us to the people themselves. The Dean made many friends among the Soviet people, and through his contacts we have intimate glimpses of the free spontaneous minds of these great people, their wide-ranging imagination, the rich cultural equipment which is to be found not only among the artists and scientists but among the simple people who work in farm and factory.

Traveling in the USSR for three months at the end of 1945 and again early in 1947, Dr. Johnson visited Moscow, Leningrad, Stalingrad, the republics of Armenia and Georgia; Asiatic Tashkent and Samarkand. He talked with Stalin and Molotov, with leaders in every field, with peasants and workers of many nationalities. He saw the tragic traces of the war everywhere, and the miracles of reconstruction already accomplished. As in his previous

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two books, he gives a great deal of attention to the economic plan which is at the basis of all the benefits of health, home, education, culture and agricultural and industrial organization.

The Dean covers almost everything you want to know about the Soviet Union—the meaning of Soviet democracy, family life, women, children, public health, national minorities, religion, science, foreign policy. He discusses a multiplicity of questions from taxation to freedom of the press. His information is based on years of research, direct observation and always validated by firsthand evidence gathered from the people themselves. He analyzes and answers the arguments of the anti-Sovieteers. He castigates the perfectionist approach applied to the Soviet Union and not elsewhere. He acknowledges mistakes and blunders, but sees these overshadowed by the glory of her positive achievements, and believes that Russia's strength will be enlarged and her liberties increased if she is vouchsafed the peace she seeks. The pages of the book glow with eloquence and warmth, as in the words with which the Dean concludes:

"I see men and women inspired by belief, the belief that they are called upon to build and actually are building a new order which falls into line with the upward trend of the world, an order which has for its goal the highest, most intimate and most subtle integration of man with man as a real brotherhood of mankind based on equality and freedom, so that I am conscious of something splendid, heart-elevating and fruitful in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and see there not an enemy but an ally of all that is best in the religions of the world."

JESSICA SMITH.

Man & Universe

THE FRONTIERS OF DRAMA, *by Una Ellis-Fermor. Oxford University Press. $3.*

DRAMA, Miss Ellis-Fermor says, "must use as its primary material the world of experience, those events and actions which constitute actuality." At the same time she believes that drama substitutes "the form of art for the chaos of life," an idealist concept which ignores the fact that life has pattern, that the forms of life are grander, richer and more complex than any idea of them, that great art arranges, "distorts" and penetrates the appearances of things in an effort to master and change reality.

Within this dualistic framework the author discusses the ways in which great artists have transcended the "natural" limits of drama—*i.e.,* drama must embody conflict, must be brief, concentrated, immediate, and carry the conviction of reality. These limits exclude, for example, drama based on the religious experience, which is beatific and lacks conflict. Milton's *Samson Agonistes* is presented as a rare exception to this rule.

Oddly enough, suitability for playing on the stage is not mentioned as one of the limits of drama; and the fact is ignored that Milton did not, and did not intend to, write a play for the stage. Shakespeare is shown, interestingly, as doing almost the work of an epic in a series of plays, the central figure of which is the Statesman-King, realized in no one hero, studied variously from the Richards and Henrys through Hamlet and Lear to Coriolanus and Anthony. The suggestion that these plays constitute an actual epic is silly, and is rejected by Miss Ellis-Fermor herself, but she indicates properly how Shakespeare gives us a "coherent presentation of spaciousness, and of the multifariousness of life," which are essential to anything that may be called great art.

The pattern, however, is conventional: first the inadequate kings (Machiavellian like Richard III, weak like Richard II), then the perfect Public Man (Henry V) reflecting the Golden Age and Elizabeth, finally the rejection of Public Life for an inner spiritual world in the later Jacobean plays. The facts are, of course, that the Elizabethan Age was not so damned golden, and that Shakespeare showed a critical pessimism long before Elizabeth died. The aristocratic culture which he partly represented, and sometimes catered to, had been on the defensive from the time that the middle class defeated the Spanish Armada and first clearly knew its power. Ignoring such influences on Shakespeare as censorship, his audiences, and the concrete political conditions of the time, Miss Ellis-Fermor states that his mature thought is a plea for individualism and the spirit as opposed to Public Life and social responsibility.

Later, the theory is set up that great tragedy must show evil and pain as observed, and good as guessed at (can't good be known?). And modern propaganda plays are labeled non-tragic because, in them, evil can be cured. Causes of suffering which can't be explained are thought more moving, more truly tragic. The *innate* injustice of man to man is here to stay.

But is inevitable evil tragic? It implies no cutting off of "what might have been." Inevitable suffering is only pitiful. To it we are resigned, and there is no significant conflict. Miss Ellis-Fer-

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mor's implication is that the grandeur of an unchanging universe alone is grand—that great drama is the spectacle of the noble individual beating his brains out on the iron bars of eternity. But we may find a larger, less inward grandeur in the tremendous drama of man's struggle with nature and with himself throughout human history—to which drama the "propaganda" play is allied, of which it may be a concrete symbol.

Nevertheless, *The Frontiers of the Drama,* though it has no link with society, makes a thoughtful analysis of form in drama which needs only, like Hegel's philosophy, to be turned upside down, or given a new content, to be illuminating.

CHARLES WASON.

Classy-Type People

COUNTRY PLACE, *by Ann Petry. Houghton Mifflin.* $2.75.

THE country place of Ann Petry's second novel exists only in the movies or in the pages of a woman's magazine. One might think her naive portrayal of good and bad people of a small Connecticut town the result of good intentions if one were not plagued by a suspicion, which becomes more confirmed as one reads, that it was aimed at those two media. In any case it seems like good lending library fare.

Purporting to give us a picture of the undercurrents of violence in the life of a small community, Miss Petry assembles a small gallery of familiar people—familiar, that is, if you have read slick fiction. There is the wealthy matriarch who is kind and dignified; her weak son, married in his middle age to a hard cold cheap woman; the hard cold cheap woman herself, a former dressmaker with ambitions; the hard cold cheap woman's daughter who is ditto, married to a fine young veteran who wants to paint; the young veteran, who could not possibly have lasted four years in the Army if his actions in the book are any clue to his character; the kindly druggist, who is the narrator of the story; and, of course, the gossip-monger of the town, a taxi-driver, who acts as the catalytic agent for the action. The minor characters are types equally tested by tradition: the anxious mother, the town rake and the colorful servants true to their kind mistress. It would not be difficult to cast the book for the movies and perhaps that is the one diversion the book offers.

The book is written in a style that attempts mightily to be matter-of-fact and which aspires under this cover to have its sudden, lyric turns-of-phrase clutch at your heartstrings. Thus, strewn on every page are, for example, sentences like the following: "Then he thrust his doubts and fears behind him and faced the wind—felt it sharp and cold against his face." That is the kind of thing that happens to the young veteran when he gets out of a taxi and turns to enter his home — no struggling with change for the fare, no opening and shutting of doors. A description of him as a baby in his mother's arms: "He was smooth-cheeked and innocent of eye, a pleasure to look at, and at the same time, wonderful and miraculous—all infants are like that before the world toughens and hardens and coarsens them." In her peculiar kind of poesy Miss Petry always uses redundancies when she means to be significant, succeeding only in underlining banalities.

In her conception of her story and characters Miss Petry exhibits a thousand snobberies. Because of what seems a yearning to duplicate the upper-middle-class world that is held out to the reader and the characters of the book as glamorous and irresistible, she puts words into the mouths of her characters that sound like high comedy. In the midst of a storm that grips the town, the wealthy old matriarch, as evidence of her quiet strength in the face of her daughter-in-law's hysteria, says lines that even Ethel Barrymore could not quite carry off: "I doubt whether the house will fall down. It has stood a good many years and it will probably continue to stand long after you and I are gone. That was one of the big elms in front of the house. It was a very old tree and it could not withstand the pressure of so young and vigorous a wind. When a century-old tree falls, it is only fitting that it should go down with a note of protest. The top branches undoubtedly struck the roof."

So much happens in this short little novel that it is impossible to give a synopsis of the story that will not sound like idiocy. Suffice it to say that the veteran struggles through the storm to find his wife in a cabin with the town rake, thinking all the while about her hair, a description of which, its color and texture, is monotonously recurrent in the book. There is an attempt at murder —of the old matriarch, of course. But she lives to make her will the next day and fall down the town hall steps with the town rake. They both die—yes, right there on the sidewalk. One of the things that keeps one reading the book is one's disbelief that Miss Petry will really follow all the formulas of this type of fiction, but she lets one down consistently, for she makes no attempt to cover her tracks—evil is punished, virtue rewarded in the end.

Oh, yes, Miss Petry is a liberal and so one of the servants is a Negro, a very nice girl indeed, a model of all the bourgeois virtues, and what could be more natural than that she should inherit the house about whose durability you have heard the old lady discourse to her low-class daughter-in-law? It may be, after all, that *Country Place* is a morality tale.

JOSE YGLESIAS.

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On Target

PRIZE STORIES OF 1947: THE O'HENRY AWARDS, *edited by Herschel Brickell. Doubleday.* $3.

THERE are plenty of good stories here—in fact, a much higher percentage of real writing than is usually found in such anthologies. Although neither won a prize, I thought the two stand-out stories were "An American Home," by Helen Eustis, and "The Burden," by John A. Lynch.

Miss Eustis, who wrote the excellent mystery *The Horizontal Man*, contributes a very clear picture of an upper-middle-class home and with sincere understanding shows the major role in the family life played by the Negro maid. Miss Eustis knows her people, and writes with a sure, realistic touch. Although the sudden negative note upon which the story ends seemed a little forced, she handles all her characters well.

Mr. Lynch was a machine-gunner in Italy, and badly wounded; his tense story, "The Burden," ought to be required reading for our current crop of warmongers. Without any dramatics or hysteria he vividly shows combat in all its terrible ugliness, the absolute unreality of life and death, the stark fear and madness.

John Bell Clayton's first-prize-winner, "The White Circle," is an interesting story of a young boy driven to a murderous rage by a bully's nagging. Robert Lewis has a wonderful story about a little French boy, "Little Victor," who lies to save the life of his friend, an American Negro soldier.

For sheer fantasy, Ray Bradbury's story of a bat, "Homecoming," is worth reading. Mary Deasy's "The Holiday" is a sympathetic study of the discrimination and baiting "hill-billies" face in America. Walter Elder has a long unconvincing story, "You Can Wreck It," about a Negro in a small town. Mr. Elder depicts his main character as subnormal and the yarn has little point. In "The Fighter" John Caswell Smith, Jr., shows a remarkable ear for dialogue as he tells of Poke, a mild version of Bigger Thomas. If this is a chapter of a novel, it is a good job, but standing by itself it lacks an explanation of Poke's difficulties and defeatism. Mr. Smith knows Harlem, and he knows how to write. He only needs to dig a little deeper.

The collection also contains, of course, the usual lacy, over-polished stories, but these are in the minority. Editor Brickell says "the expected creative flow is obviously being blocked by the general uneasiness abroad in the world today." While this is certainly true to some extent, the creative flow is still going strong—what are needed are editors and publishers who have confidence in both their writers and readers.

Two of the judges seem a trifle unhappy about the stories submitted to them. (It would be interesting to know what magazines were read by editor Brickell and his aides, and on what basis the judges were picked.) Paul Jordon-Smith, literary editor of the Los Angeles *Times*, was depressed because ". . . practically all the writers chose insignificant people and events for their subjects." You mean such petty little matters as war and discrimination, Mr. Smith? And Struthers Burt sadly writes that the writers seem to believe ". . . the American Dream, personally and otherwise, has gone badly askew."

But in spite of this, the boys have really turned out a decent collection of American short stories. FRED WITWER.

Joshua

THE WALLS CAME TUMBLING DOWN, *by Mary White Ovington. Harcourt, Brace.* $3.

THE author's life has been devoted, for half a century, to attempts at prodding the conscience of America into an awareness of the sufferings of the Negro people. Originally, socialism attracted her, but, deciding in her youth that she could do no more than "cheer the workers on and throw them a few pennies," she determined to "cease working for socialism and to give what strength and ability" she had to the task of securing equality for the Negro.

This erroneous theoretical distinction results in seriously weakening one's practical

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work. It leads, also, to a certain superficiality in Mrs. Ovington's writing, so that, for example, the "analysis" of Booker T. Washington reads: "The South respected him because he was trying to make the Negro a better workman." Nevertheless, her efforts have been of great significance and her autobiography is necessary reading. It is good to meet again half-forgotten figures like Jesse Max Barber, editor of some forty years ago of a fighting Negro magazine published in Atlanta, or Joseph Manning, a courageous white newspaperman of Alabama, and it is valuable to get first-hand accounts, brief though they are, of such key events as the founding of the NAACP, the Elaine, Arkansas "insurrection" of 1919, and the Sweet segregation case of 1925.

HERBERT APTHEKER.

In Brief

EUROPE WITHOUT BAEDEKER, by Edmund Wilson. Doubleday. $4. The *New Yorker* sent Edmund Wilson on a tour of Europe in the spring and summer of 1945. The account of his journeys through war-wrecked England, Italy and Greece reveals almost as much of the author's personality as it does of conditions in those countries. Mr. Wilson is a perceptive and intelligent observer, but his sensibility and judgment are always pulled out of shape by a deep underlying misanthropy which he cannot keep in check. For example, there is a section of his book which reports, with the sometimes special clarity of venom, the role of the British in Greece and the character of the Greek Right. But in one of the chapters, describing a man whom he felt was a "convinced fellow traveller," Wilson remarks, "Later I tried to put my finger on the symptoms which made me feel this. It seemed to me that I was able to identify them in the special kind of cheerfulness and certainty with which he rose to meet every problem." This is said ironically and Mr. Wilson provides a fancy psycho-political explanation for a gaiety so lacking in "common sense." But beyond the irony one can detect a mite of guilt and envy. Mr. Wilson does not want to soil his hands helping to change a world whose corruption he understands, detests, yet enjoys; and he has come to hate all those who are less fastidious than himself. This, much more than principle or political conviction, motivates his anti-communism.

STAVROGIN'S CONFESSION, *by F. M. Dostoevsky.* Including DOSTOEVSKY AND PARRICIDE, *by Sigmund Freud. Lear.* $2.75. The Virginia Woolf and S. S. Koteliansky translation of the suppressed chapters from *The Possessed,* with a study by the Soviet scholar V. Komarovich on the history and literary significance of the discovery. Freud's essay will be of great interest to students, though they must be warned, as Freud himself cautioned, that "before the problem of the creative artist, analysis must lay down its arms."

AMIABLE AUTOCRAT, A BIOGRAPHY OF DR. OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, *by Eleanor M. Tilton. Schuman.* $5. A "pure" biography, untainted by critical estimate, but also perhaps somewhat less valuable for that reason.

THE MISINTERPRETATION OF MAN, *by Paul Roubiczek. Scribners.* $2.75. An attempt to prove that Christian belief alone will lead to the liberation of mankind, because it is "the revelation of a supernatural reality." The writer accuses most modern thinkers of attacking Marxism without having read anything of it, and then proceeds to criticize it as though he had not either. For example: "He [Marx] explains Kant . . . as the expression of the social conditions of his life and thus does not even need to take the trouble . . ." etc., etc. We also learn, for the thousandth time, that Marx and Engels "did not feel the necessity to lay special emphasis upon the human element in their work." It is interesting how such misconceptions can persist in even the most respectable scholars.

THE STORY OF AMERICAN RAILROADS, *by Stewart H. Holbrook. Crown.* $4.50. A long, rambling ride which, while it whizzes through most of the main stations, makes entertaining stops at all the way stations of railroad lore. There's a chapter on train robbers, an explanation of why the standard rail gauge is exactly four feet, eight and one-half inches, and even a chapter on the railroad in American drama. Typical of the highly informal style is this footnote: "Incidentally, the great transcontinental land grant railroads—the Northern Pacific, Central and Union Pacific—all were bankrupt before 1890. Jim Hill drove his Great Northern rails to the West Coast without the aid of a land grant. I am not sure what this proves."

THE NEW YORKER BOOK OF WAR PIECES. *Reynal & Hitchcock.* $5. These seventy-odd examples of *New Yorker* reportage avoid most of the cliches of war correspondents. They deal with almost every phase of the war, from the New Guinea campaign to life in a London drawing room during the blitz, as well as John Hersey's account of Hiroshima. Some of the outstanding stories are those by A. J. Liebling, Mark Murphy and Walter Bernstein. On the whole, though, the *New Yorker* war begins to wear you down; most everyone seems to be inspecting the conflict rather than feeling it. The highly selective experience of the reporters reveals itself as a technique for avoiding at all costs the expression of an emotion that was probably felt and then discarded for the sake of good taste.

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS, *by Jonathan Swift. Illustrated by Luis Quintanilla. Introduction by Jacques Barzun. Crown.* $5. This complete and unabridged edition should

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make a fine Christmas present for adult readers, but is good for year-round giving, too. Twenty-four of the Quintanilla drawings are original prints, made from metal plates engraved by the artist himself. There are reproductions of 160 additional drawings. The introduction might have had more historical reference and less overwritten philosophizing, but it is as adequate as most prefaces. If you have no Swift, by all means get this.

BRIDGES OVER THE RHINE, *by Ernst Erich Noth. Holt.* $3. A passionate but politically uninformed appeal not to allow differences between the United States and the Soviet Union to become the occasion for a resurrection of a reactionary Germany. Mr. Noth's desperate warning is vitiated by a deliberate refusal to discuss the economic forces in America which are directly responsible for the resurrection of such a Germany. It is advice given to the wolf not to eat for fear of a stomach-ache. The author's anti-Sovietism creates a further paradox, which can be put in the form of a question: how does it happen that the Soviet Union does not present a war danger equal to that of a restored fascist Germany, if it is the tyrannous state Mr. Noth claims it is? If you want to keep the family together, stop beating your brother day after day.

THEATER

THE time is 1912. An engagement is being celebrated by a "little family party" consisting of the engaged couple, Sheila Birling and Gerald Croft, Papa and Mama Birling and brother Eric. Papa Birling, portly and successful businessman, roars his platitudes—among them his personal assurance of a serene future for the young couple despite all this nonsense about a war which the practical men of the world, meaning his kind, simply won't have.

The engagement diamond has been shown around, the toasts have been drunk, Mr. Birling has been left alone with Mr. Croft to discuss delicate but essential matters when a car grinds to a stop on the driveway outside and Police Inspector Goole is announced.

No one is flustered. Mr. Birling, as an ex-justice of the peace, assumes that some forgotten thread of routine has to be tied in place. But Goole informs them that a girl named Eva Smith has just died in agony after swallowing disinfecting fluid. Entries in a diary, discovered at her lodgings, make it necessary for him to question them all.

Goole is disturbingly different from the ordinary inspector. For him the questioning is more than a "painful duty" to be got over with as quickly as possible and with a minimum of inconvenience to such respectable people. For him it is a real responsibility; he behaves as an embodiment of social conscience. The effect is astounding. Unwilling confessions sputter forth.

Two years ago Papa Birling gave Eva the first push to her death when he broke a strike and sacked the "ringleaders," among them Eva. Some months later daughter Sheila gave the second push when, tired and irritable after a disappointing day's shopping, she complained about a sales girl. The girl was Eva, working under another name to get around the blacklist. Eva's hitherto good record in the store is nothing compared to the wrath of a good customer; she is discharged. Jobs are hard to find and she puts herself diffidently on display in a certain public place. There Gerald Croft, seeking diversion, picks her up. The affair is a heavenly interlude to Eva. Its warmth and security are wonders to her; but it, too, gives her a push toward the suicide by providing the kept-woman preliminary to the despairing resort of prostitution. It is Eric Birling who gives her the next shove by drunken and irresponsible lovemaking that leaves her pregnant. And Mama Birling, as head of a charity for "unfortunate girls," gives the final push by refusing her any aid, unwittingly helping to destroy her own grandchild.

Who, then, killed Eva Smith? Individually no one; but collectively all. And as efficiently as if they had plotted the murder and had each carried out his part as assigned.

As with *How I Wonder* the critics were not enthusiastic over this new demonstration, on the stage, of inescapable social responsibility. But since it did not involve them directly as intellectuals they seem to have found it rather more bearable.

Had Priestley sought to make his point merely by establishing the fact of social responsibility it would have been valid and valuable enough, but it would have been a tale told over again. And for the first two acts that is all the play seems to be. But in the third act Priestley goes deeper into the incapacity of the Birlings and, by symbolic extension, of the bourgeoisie, to fulfill their social responsibility. Being incapable of it they are, by implication, unfit for the power they hold.

Each preceding action and statement of the play gains multiplied retrospective meaning in the remarkable third

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act, in which this conclusion is made inevitable. Young Croft discovers that no Inspector Goole is known on the police force. Further inquiry discloses that no suicide named Eva Smith, or any suicide, for that matter, had been reported at the hospital. So though nothing Croft and the Birlings have admitted doing can be undone, it is not official, not on the record, nothing to be concerned about. Papa Birling recovers his appetite along with his aplomb, and picks tidbits off the table; mama claims and receives credit for having been the only one to give the inspector backtalk; and Gerald Croft, as the bearer of the good tidings, looks hopefully for forgiveness for the Eva Smith interlude. Sheila and Eric, younger than the others, not yet so calloused that emotions cannot penetrate, remain a little shaken. Sheila, for example, is not quite ready for the reconciliation with Gerald, though the emotional preparations are visibly under way. Then, while their self-congratulation is at its height, there is a phone call. It is from Police Headquarters, notifying them of the suicide of a girl . . . entries in her diary . . . an inspector is on his way. Outside a car grinds to a stop on the driveway.

In this simple and powerful parable the reviewers have professed to see mystical vagueness; which suggests, in light of their reactions to *How I Wonder*, that any effort of the imagination to symbolize social responsibility will be dismissed as vague mysticism. At one point in the play the inspector warns of the heavy shedding of tears and blood if the recognition of social responsibility is not affirmed. How many returns of the inspector, Priestley asks us, will civilization require?

In a uniformly fine performance the acting of Melville Cooper as Papa Birling stood out. Cedric Hardwicke's direction was singularly effective; and Stewart Chaney's setting, costumes and lighting contributed substantially to one of the year's notable productions.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

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RECORDS

THE Paganini Quartet, comprising four top-notch musicians, makes its record debut in the three Beethoven Rasoumovsky Quartets: No. 1, in F (RCA Victor 1151), No. 2 in E Minor (1152) and No. 3 in C (1153). It was into these three masterful works, more than in any orchestral works of the period, that Beethoven poured all the invention he had developed in the "Eroica"

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Symphony. The performances are smaller in conception than the Busch and Budapest readings of these works, but beautiful in detail and excellently recorded.

Unlike some modern works, whose strangeness must first be conquered, Mendelssohn's oratorio "Elijah" is a little difficult to listen to now for its excessive good taste and sweetness. Yet there is a wealth of good music in it, even if it is a little diffuse; and the performance by the Huddersfield Chorus, with Malcolm Sargeant leading the Liverpool Symphony, and a quartet of soloists headed by Isobel Baillie and Harold Williams, is a dream one. I can hardly imagine it bettered (Columbia 715).

Hector Berlioz, in his love for massive sound, bold rhythm and color, and dramatic characterization, was the spiritual child of the French revolution, even though born a couple of generations later. It is also perhaps because it has been little imitated, and certainly not over-performed, that such music as the Reverie, Ball and Love Scene from his symphony "Romeo and Juliet" sounds so fresh and moving in every note. Toscanini performs it with his most passionate feeling and meticulous attention to detail (RCA Victor 1160).

An album of Mozart arias is especially important because it contains, for the first time on records, the full "Martern aller Allern" from "Il Seraglio," a magnificent example of what might be called a concerto for voice. Eleanor Steber sings this, and the two Susanna arias from "Figaro," with good style and technical command (Victor 1157). Jan Peerce and Leonard Warren do the two "Forza Del Destino" duets and the last-act "Boheme" duet acceptably, though they do not erase the memory of Caruso, De Luca and Scotti (Victor 1156). Among some single RCA Victor operatic records, the biggest surprise is Nan Marriman's thrilling performance of "O Mio Fernando" from "La Favorita." Dorothy Kirsten continues her excellent recorded performances with the "Manon Lescaut" aria and the Death Scene from "Thais," in which she is joined by Robert Merrill. Set Svanholm makes a pleasing record debut in the first act air and the "Prize Song" from "Die Meistersinger," and Joel Berglund does a very musical, if not world-beating, job with Leporello's "Madamina" from "Don Giovanni." Blanche Thebom is very lovely in the "Voce di Donna" from "Gioconda," but doesn't penetrate deeply into the drama and suspense of "Erda's Warning" from "Rheingold." Leonard Warren shows a fresh voice in the "Pagliacci" Prelude, a tired one in the barcarolle from "Gioconda." Robert Merrill does well, as always, in the Carmen "Toreador Song" and "Di Provenza" from "Traviata."

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